

CLAIMS

It is claimed:

1. A method of [scs1] displaying advertisements to a user of an online service using a client application on a local device, the local device including an input device and an output device, the user using the local device for accessing an online server associated with the online service and providing interaction with the online service, the method comprising the steps of:
- the client application activating;
 - the client application establishing a communication channel from the local device to the online server;
 - a browser application activating;
 - the client application causing at least one advertisement to be displayed on the output device of the local device;
 - the client application monitoring the user's interaction with the local device with respect to the client application and thereby detecting whether the user is interacting with the online service;
 - if the user has not interacted with the local device with respect to the client application for a predetermined amount of time, the client application causing a dialog to be displayed on the output device of the local device, wherein the dialog notifies the

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18 user that the user has been inactive with respect to the online service, and wherein a
19 display associated with a resource locator is displayed in the dialog.

1 2. The method of displaying advertisements to a user of an online service using a
2 client application on a local device of claim 1, wherein the resource locator is associated
3 with an advertisement.

1 3. The method of displaying advertisements to a user of an online service using a
2 client application on a local device of claim 1, wherein the display of at least one
3 advertisement operates in accordance with a first play list, the first play list comprising
4 at least one ad object, each ad object comprising a resource locator for a given
5 advertisement, a resource locator for a click-through associated with the given
6 advertisement, and at least one display attribute for the given advertisement, the first
7 play list further specifying an order in which the advertisements identified in the play
8 list are to be displayed.

1 4. The method of displaying advertisements to a user of an online service using a
2 client application on a local device of claim 3, additionally comprising the client
3 application pausing the play list if the user has not interacted with the local device with
4 respect to the client application for the predetermined amount of time.

1 5. The method of displaying advertisements to a user of an online service using a

2 client application on a local device of claim 1, wherein at least one advertisement is
3 displayed in a client window displayed by the client application.

1 6. The method of displaying advertisements to a user of an online service using a
2 client application on a local device of claim 5, wherein the client application determines
3 that the user has not interacted with the local device with respect to the client
4 application for a predetermined amount of time if the user has not clicked on an
5 advertisement in the client window within the predetermined amount of time.

1 7. The method of displaying advertisements to a user of an online service using a
2 client application on a local device of claim 5, wherein the client window includes a
3 plurality of user-selectable icons, each icon being associated with a given function of the
4 client application, and wherein the client application determines that the user has not
5 interacted with the local device with respect to the client application for a predetermined
6 amount of time if the user not has not clicked on any of the icons within the
7 predetermined amount of time.

1 8. The method of displaying advertisements to a user of an online service using a
2 client application on a local device of claim 1, wherein the client application establishes
3 the communication channel by creating a physical link between the local device and the
4 online server via a public switched telephone network.

1 9. The method of displaying advertisements to a user of an online service using a client
2 application on a local device of claim 1, wherein the client application establishes the
3 communication channel via a cable modem connection.

1 ~~10.~~ A method of displaying advertisements to a user of an online service using a client
2 application on a local device, the local device including an input device and an output
3 device, the local device having a continuous communications link to an online server
4 associated with the online service, the user using the local device for accessing the
5 online service and providing interaction with the online service, the method comprising
6 the steps of:

7 the client application activating;

8 a browser application activating;

9 the browser application displaying a browser window on the output device of
10 the local device;

11 the client application causing at least one advertisement to be displayed in a
12 window on the output device of the local device;

13 the client application monitoring the user's interaction with the window and
14 thereby detecting whether the user is interacting with the online service;

15 the client application removing the window from the output device of the

16 local device if the user has not interacted with the window for a predetermined amount
17 of time.

1 11. The method of displaying advertisements to a user of an online service using a
2 client application on a local device of claim 9, wherein the window is a client window
3 displayed by the client application.

1 12. The method of displaying advertisements to a user of an online service using a
2 client application on a local device of claim 11, the method further comprising, after the
3 client window had been removed from display on the local device, the client application
4 re-displaying the client window on the output device of the local device if the user
5 interacts with the browser application.

1 13. The method of displaying advertisements to a user of an online service using a
2 client application on a local device of claim 9, wherein the display of at least one
3 advertisement operates in accordance with a first play list, the first play list comprising
4 at least one ad object, each ad object comprising a resource locator for a given
5 advertisement, a resource locator for a click-through associated with the given
6 advertisement, and at least one display attribute for the given advertisement, the first
7 play list further specifying an order in which the advertisements identified in the play
8 list are to be displayed.

3 application displaying a dialog if the user has not interacted with the local device with
4 respect to the client application for a predetermined amount of time, wherein the dialog
5 provides the user with notification that the user has not interacted with the local device
6 with respect to the client application for the predetermined amount of time and wherein
7 an advertisement is displayed in the dialog.

1 19. The method of displaying advertisements to a user of an online service using a
2 client application on a local device of claim 17, wherein the window is a client window
3 displayed by the client application.

1 20. The method of displaying advertisements to a user of an online service using a
2 client application on a local device of claim 17, the method further comprising the client
3 application closing the communication channel if the user has not interacted with the
4 local device with respect to the client application for a predetermined amount of time.

1 21. The method of displaying advertisements to a user of an online service using a
2 client application on a local device of claim 20, wherein the client application
3 establishes a communication channel from the local device to the online server via
4 telephone connection.

1 22. A system for displaying advertisements to a user of an online service, the user
2 utilizing the online service with a local device, wherein the local device displays

2 22, wherein the display of at least one advertisement operates in accordance with a first
3 play list, the first play list comprising at least one ad object, each ad object comprising a
4 resource locator for a given advertisement, a resource locator for a click-through
5 associated with the given advertisement, and at least one display attribute for the given
6 advertisement, the first play list further specifying an order in which the advertisements
7 identified in the play list are to be displayed.

1 25. The system for displaying advertisements to a user of an online service of claim
2 22, the software further for causing the local device to pause the play list if the user has
3 not interacted with the local device with respect to the client application for the
4 predetermined amount of time.

1 26. The system for displaying advertisements to a user of an online service of claim
2 22, wherein the window is a client window displayed by the client application, and it is
3 determined that the user has not interacted with the local device with respect to the
4 client application for a predetermined amount of time if the user has not clicked on an
5 advertisement in the client window within the predetermined amount of time.

1 27. The system for displaying advertisements to a user of an online service of claim
2 22, wherein the window is a client window displayed by the client application, and the
3 client window includes a plurality of user-selectable icons, each icon being associated
4 with a given function of the client application, and wherein it is determined that the user

5 has not interacted with the local device with respect to the client application for a
6 predetermined amount of time if the user not has not clicked on any of the icons within
7 the predetermined amount of time.

1 28. The system for displaying advertisements to a user of an online service of claim
2 22, wherein the local device establishes the communication channel by creating a
3 physical link between the local device and the online server via a public switched
4 telephone network.

1 29. The system for displaying advertisements to a user of an online service of claim
2 22, wherein the local device establishes the communication channel via a cable modem
3 connection.

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